## SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

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## DEMOCRATS WELCOME MOVEMENT ON MINIMUM WAGE

"But Don't Play Games with Low-Income Workers' Expectations"

LANSING- Senate Democrats welcomed movement today in the Michigan Senate that would, if supported by the House and signed by Governor Granholm, raise the state minimum wage to \$6.95 by this fall. The Democrats said they welcome any movement that might help Michigan's struggling low-income workers and hoped that the GOP's recent conversion on the minimum wage issue is sincere.

"Anything that gets us closer to giving low-income workers the relief they desperately need has to been seen as a positive development," said Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor), the Senate author of the legislation to raise the state minimum wage. "I commend my Senate Republican colleagues for finally seeing the dire need for this legislation and urge them to do what they can to secure this measure's adoption in the House."

The substitute amendment passed by the Senate today will raise the state minimum wage to \$6.95 on October 1, 2006. The minimum wage will increase again on July 1, 2007 to \$7.15 and will be raised for a final time to \$7.40 on July 1, 2008. However, unlike an earlier proposal offered by the Senate Democrats, the amended bill will not tie future minimum wage increases to the rate of inflation nor codify the annual increases in the state constitution.

"For many of the men and women who earn the current minimum wage, it just hasn't been enough," said Sen. Deb Cherry (D-Burton). "I hope passage of today's legislation to increase the minimum wage is not political maneuvering by some in the Senate or anything that would give Michigan workers false hope."

Senate Democrats first introduced the minimum wage legislation in March of 2005. Democrats say they will continue to put their full support behind a petition drive to raise the state minimum wage unless a legislative agreement is reached.

"No one deserves to work full time and live in poverty. Raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do," said Sen. Schauer (D-Battle Creek). "I hope today's support in the Senate was genuine and that we see the proposal move quickly through the House."